

Pakistan –Iran gaspipeline

Abstract. Pakistan & Iran finally signed deal for laying of gas pipeline that will benefit India as well. Pakistan is the key American ally in the region and India a prominent economic partner while Iran is the hub of all evils making it an interesting game. Is USA going to enforce or impose sanctions on Pakistan ? and how his moves are going to affect the Afghanistan in post America withdrawal .

Aryan Connections.

Long long before America was discovered there existed a civilisation in the above mentioned region. The very first record of human civilisation indicates the Persian Empire as the most powerful nation on earth extending to Greece in West and India in East. World history originates around the banks of rivers especially the Nile, Mesopotamia, Yellow and Indus River. Unlike the other three civilizations there is no written record of Indus Valley but through the archaeological evidence it is regarded as the cradle of civilization. The oral history Rig Veda which dates back to almost 1100 years B.C. highlights the fact that the mountainous tribes Aryans migrated from Central Asia and came down upon the plains of Indus Valley. These Aryans were fun loving cruel nomads who had their own code of conduct in which it was expected to honour the guests and not to let anyone go empty handed if he has knocked on your door, Aryans gamble and drink Soma which was an intoxicating substance, Aryan was generally scared of his mother in law especially after losing in gambling. These Aryans entrenched themselves in the upper part of Indus Valley at Harappa and later they destroyed the Dravidians living in the lower part of Indus Valley notably MoenjoDaro. Who were these Aryans? the history is not very clear or precise the reason being lack of any physical evidence as present in other riparian civilisations.¹

Herodotus the ‘Father of History’ wrote an account of Indus Valley in 400 B.C. The Indus Valley was divided into two separate layers. Lower portion known as Moenjodharo, the upper portion was known as the Tashkila (present day Taxila) it was the last of the twenty satrapies (provinces) of the Persian empire under Darius and the most wealthy because it was paying the highest amount of tax, it was paying 360 talents of gold where as the Bactra was paying 360 talents of silver and the gold was worth 15 times more than silver. The whole of the Indus Valley region was called Hindu by the Persians, Sindhu in Sanskrit language is the name for river and because of phonetics the Persians started calling it Hindu and all the

¹

AryaDesh was the name of India, Northern Tribes call it India or Hindu as noted by Hsin-Tu in 7th AD, see The Discovery of India. Jawaharlal Nehru[John Day ,New York,1945],p-63.Chinese called India as Shin-Tu see James Legge, A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms The Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of His Travels in India & Ceylon AD 399-414,(Oxford,1886),p-26.also see Jhon Keay History of India(Grover,NewYork,2000),p-57,word for river in Sanskrit is Sindhu.

inhabitants were known as Hindus. Alexander the Great from 330 B.C. entered into the region which is presently known as Central Asia and entered into present day Pakistan in 326 B.C. The natives whom he encountered in his expedition were fierce and militant in nature. Alexander entered from the Khyber Pass in a two pronged advance and later crossed Indus close to present day Attock, had his major and decisive battle against Porus on the banks of Hydaspes (Jhelum River), moved forward and finally on the eastern banks of Ravi his troops mutinied and he rolled back his forces opting to follow the River Indus downstream. He sailed with portion of his forces and majority marched on the banks for protection. He met constant resistance and attack during this sojourn from tribes inhabiting the banks of Indus. Alexander was able to survive and considered himself fortunate enough to reach back Persia through the present day Balochistan.² This Greek invasion provided the first ever written account of the natives as Alexander had no less than five court historians to record his adventure, unfortunately none of that has survived today.

India by Alexander time had progressed into two distinct riparian civilisations the Ganges/Jumna & Indus with its Punjab tributaries. Alexander had left his Greek lieutenants in the conquered territories which soon after Alexander's death erupted into a civil war with River Indus acting by and large as the boundary. The Mauryan Dynasty under Chandragupta Maurya emerged at the Magadha on the banks of Ganges and later his grandson Asoka expanded the empire but he soon became an ardent Buddhist renouncing all kind of violence. This non violent approach was adopted as the state policy and became an integral part of Ganges culture where as the tribes of Indus Valley especially living in the adjoining mountains retained their Aryan identity.

ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA

The very first Islamic army had knocked on the doors of the Central Asia when they were in the hunt of the Firuz the emperor of Persia , Muslims had settled at Merv by 646 AD. Qutaibah ibn Muslim was the governor of Khurasan the north eastern part of Persia who between 710-715 A.D., conquered the Central Asia especially the Bactria and Ferghana valley the heart land of the Turks, these Turks were nomadic tribes originating from the Mongolian steppes and one of the tribe Ye Hu was able to establish himself in the Jaxarates (Amu Drya) area, Turk was the name given by Arabs to all nomadic tribes of Central Asia thus it does not represent any particular ethnic tribe³. In 751 A.D., a decisive battle between the Muslims and the Turks who also had the support of the Chinese army, not only the Turks were defeated but it also put an end to the Chinese rule in the area for another thousand years. Resultantly almost all Turk tribes accepted Islam.

Afghanistan was not a country at that era in same sense as one talks of Persia of that time. The society dwelled around the mountains and a tribal system which was a direct descendent of Old Testament flourished in mountainous region of Hindu Kush, a kind of

² *The Lost Histories of Alexander The Great, Lionel Pearson(Scholar Press,Chicago,1983),p-1*

³ *The Muslim World, Age of Caliphates, p-37*

controlled anarchy, where all the tribes were independent to run their affairs which amounted mainly in livestock breeding and raids on the caravans and low lying villages astride the foothills.

ISLAM

Traditionally the Pathan considers them to be one of the lost tribe of the Moses for the reason that it gives them a lineage to the Abraham religion rather than to be termed as anything else. The Pathan tradition highlights that they are one of the early converts of Islam, one of their tribal leader was called by the most famous of all the Muslim and Arab General Khalid Bin Waleed to the Mecca and there they embraced Islam, the one logic which the Pathan gives in support; the fact that they have the same name of their pass the Khyber which is also the name of another important place in the Arab and early Islamic history 'The Khyber' of the Jews.

GHAZNA

The founder of the dynasty was Sebuktegin (r 977-997 A.D.,) a Turk slave who rose to distinction and it was he who like earlier Aryans claimed his territory to the natural boundary of Indus. This frontier including Kabul were under Hindu Shahi kingdoms. He first invaded India and defeated the Hindu Shahis (989 & in 991 AD) who gave tribute to Ghazna. After his death his son Mahmud of Ghazna continued the conquest(1000-1030 A.D.,). The striking aspect of the successive humiliation of the Hindu states year after year takes the art of warfare to new heights, the psychological impact on the overall population must have been devastating as it created a myth of geographical superiority between the plain dwellers of Punjab, Sind, Deccan and Ganges Valley who were ruthlessly being subdued by the mountainous people. The nomadic tribes and Turks were after all nothing else but nomads. Wealth taken at will from the Hindu temples help him create the Ghazna culture which became the symbol of the Turkish people. On the historic note it was the culmination point of the Aryans who almost 2000 years ago humiliated the Dravidians, this time they built Ghazna seat of first Islamic Kingdom of Hindustan. Notable historian Al Berouni was able to write down the history of the regime and the social life pattern of the India. India in practical term was just a vassal state of Ghazna. As its very capital of Harsha empire Kanauj was sacked by him in 1018 in which the Rajputs displayed their honour of committing mass Jauhar (suicide) after defeat, in 1024 Mahmud's most severe psychological blow came with his almost 500 miles deep expedition to the southern Dravidian sacred temple at Somnath 'it had 1000 Brahmins, 300 barbers and 350 temple prostitutes in constant attendance and chief idol a huge lingam the phallic symbol of Shiva was washed in water from the sacred Ganges carried over 750 miles.'⁴ For Hindu nation it was a knockout blow an ultimate defeat of Dravidian culture's and religious surrender. The destruction of the myth and symbol of Brahmin and Hindu identity was a mental surrender, from this state of mind Hindus never recovered right till the end when India was divided on the religious line.

India after the Mahmud of Ghazna's raids became a vassal state for the Turk dynasties of the western mountains, Indus became part of mountain dwellers. The very fact that Indus Valley had embraced Islam changed the overall picture of the area. The invading Turks were not regarded as invaders rather as brethren of Islam. Ghazna was destroyed by the neighbouring Ghor and with it the India also passed from the hands of the Ghaznavities to Ghorids. Shihab ud Din Ghorī was initially resisted by the Ganga Valley but very next year the all semblance of resistance were destroyed by Shihab ud Din and from 1206-1526 A.D., India or more specifically all the three riparian civilisations were under the control of Muslims who were chiefly Turks and Afghans, later this was overthrown by the Moguls who descended down from Central Asia.

The invasion of Tamerlane in 1399 A.D., and before him the Mongols in 12th century both originating from the Central Asia once again engraved the racial superiority of the mountain dwellers. Since Tamerlane had specifically targeted the Hindu population thus the religious supremacy of Islam over the non believers remained intact.

MUGHUL

Mughul Empire was established by Babur of Ferghana in 1520 A.D., after crushing the Muslim Sultan of Delhi, (Sultan Lodhi was an Afghan) Mughul empire later not only protected the native population from the raids of mountain tribes of Afghanistan but also adopted a more liberal approach towards the non believers with varying degree of freedom. Afghanistan did not exist as a country under Mughuls,⁵ Kabul the main city acted as a base camp for the Babur, other important cities like Kandahar, Herat, Khiva and Bukhara were ruled by the native tribes and might is right was the law. It was Akbar the Great who had Kandahar under his rule, another Mughul King Shah Jehan did try to capture the Central Asia and was successful for a short time to keep imperial forces at Ferghana. Western part of Afghanistan remained under control of Persia before the Hostilak rebellion of 1720 A.D., which again put the Kandharis in power. In 1738 A.D. Delhi was ravaged first by the Persian Nadir Shah and later in 1763 A.D., by the Afghan Ahmed Shah Abdali who in true sense is the founder of modern day Afghanistan. He kept Lahore, Kashmir and Multan as provinces of his Afghan empire and from this point in history the cultural clash took a new shape in the form of religious animosity between the Afghan Muslims and the Punjabi Sikhs.

Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan & India an Aryan Varta.

Thus it can be seen that region under discussion has historical links among it, they all trace their blood line to Aryans with varying degree of association. India is the odd man out because where as all the other three countries follows Islamic religion where as India is secular in nature; still India is home of more Muslims than Iran and Afghanistan put together. These Muslims have their own weight in every department of political life cycle. Indus Valley Aryans have never been ruled by the Gangetic and same is the fact that none of the inhabitants of Indus have ruled over Iran ; on the other hand Iran has been the master of the area in ancient civilisation and also a key king maker in 15th century as well.

Since 1947 when Pakistan and India took birth, relations between all three countries remained exemplary in broad sense. Pakistan & India were at odds to each other over Kashmir and went to war. It were the tribes of North Waziristan {Aryans} who spearheaded this assault on Kashmir Valley. Pakistan and India went to full scale conventional war in 1965 and then again in 1971, resultantly Pakistan had to grant freedom to eastern province of East Pakistan. This section must also be seen in the historical perspective, Brahmaputra Valley is alien to Indus Valley dwellers and empowering them on the basis of adult franchise rule defies historical logic.

Iran was the first country to recognise the Pakistan. There is another factor also in Pakistan and Iran relationship and that dates back to early days of Islamic history. Iranians are followers of Shia faith and form almost 20% of 98% Muslim population of Pakistan. There are serious theological difference between these two communities.

India is the odd country, it is fast developing and yearns to be a world leader ; which it rightly deserves but there is only one major hurdle in this dream into reality context, it requires power for its factories. Only Iran is capable of proving and meeting the power requirement of both countries.

Pakistan is the worst hit country in terms of power shortage. For last three decades public is enduring constant and regular long spells of summer without any power supply for unending long spells. In villages, cities, towns, schools, hospitals, factories lack of power is playing with nerves of people and economy of country. In November 2012, twenty eight infants died in Larkana hospital while in incubator because of power breakdown; hospital did not had the funds to buy diesel for its generator.

Political system in Pakistan is rather on weak footing as compare to India and Iran, repeated military coups have resulted in leaving behind far reaching political enigmas. Present political system for its survivability requires overwhelming support of people; who tend to be more critical of civilian regimes in such hour of needs. High price of petroleum have resulted in increase of transport fare hike there by affecting all shreds of life. Thus this pipe line is now a blood vein for Indus Valley.

Iran on the other hand can certainly benefit from the richness of Indus Valley in terms of food grains; which it lacks due to absence of water.

American Point of View.

Fortunately the signing ceremony has taken place after the inauguration ceremony of Barack Obama for second term in office. Had it been done before the November elections than the reaction of Americans might have been more predictable. It would have been a test case for the election campaign. American issue is more of image preservation rather than the rational approach. America is going to gain nothing from the sanctions on Pakistan. Country is already living, working and progressing under war situation with daily Drone attacks, suicide bombing, terrorist attacks on law enforcing agencies and sectarian riots. If economy plunges further than anarchy will take place rather military will take over before that signalling a rather fast track to anarchy.

Strategic Bombing of WW2 & its effectiveness.

The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, as explained by the Congressional Research Service, requires the US president to:

Impose sanctions “if a person has, with actual knowledge, made an investment of \$20 million or more that directly and significantly contributed to Iran’s ability to develop its petroleum resources.”

Sanctions established under this Act are in addition to any sanctions already imposed under the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.

The 2010 act establishes additional sanctions prohibiting specified foreign exchange, banking, and property transactions.

It is part of a larger US campaign to target the Iranian petroleum industry with the aim to force Iran to abandon its nuclear programme. The act was passed by the House (408-8) and Senate (99-0) on June 24, 2010 and signed into law by President Barack Obama on July 1, 2010.

As the US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said on Monday, the act forced the European Union and Japan to drastically reduce their dependence on Iranian oil.

“In the case of the EU, they’re now at zero. In the case of Japan, they’ve been making a steady decline, as have other countries that we have waived sanctions on,” she said,

But the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, if finalised, “would take Pakistan in the wrong direction right at a time that we’re trying to work with Pakistan on better, more reliable ways to meet its energy needs.”

During the 2012 presidential campaign, Mr Obama said that the US-sponsored economic sanctions were “crippling the Iranian economy” which was now “in shambles.”

They also claimed that the sanctions had triggered such widespread discontent in Iran that the regime could be toppled in a popular revolt.

An Israeli foreign minister document, leaked recently, reported that Iranian energy exports had fallen by 50 per cent after the European Union joined the United States last year in imposing an oil embargo on Iran.

US officials and diplomatic sources in Washington say that allowing Pakistan to finalise the pipeline deal will reduce the impact of the sanctions by allowing Iran to export its gas. That’s why, they argue, Washington is opposing the deal.

But a report posted on a popular US news site noted that the sanctions were hurting the Iranian people, not the government. The sanctions were making the Iranian currency “increasingly worthless,” the report added. The currency, Rial, has dropped 80 per cent in just the past year.

"This was making it hard for Iranians to procure medicine from overseas. The price of an imported wheelchair has increased ten-fold in just a year. The price for a cancer patient to receive chemotherapy has nearly tripled, and filters for kidney dialysis are up by 325 per cent," said the report while urging the United States to ease the sanctions.

The presidents of Iran and Pakistan on Monday inaugurated the construction of a much-delayed section of a \$7.5 billion gas pipeline linking the two neighbours, Iranian media reported.

The project was launched at a ceremony on the Iran-Pakistan border attended by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari, the reports said.

The two leaders jointly unveiled a plaque before shaking hands and offering prayers for the successful conclusion of the project, which involves the laying of a 780 kilometre (485 mile) section of the pipeline on the Pakistani side, expected to cost some \$1.5 billion.

"The completion of the pipeline is in the interests of peace, security and progress of the two countries ... it will also consolidate the economic, political and security ties of the two nations," they said in a joint statement.

Ahmadinejad hailed the fact that work on the new section of pipeline was going ahead despite US sanctions against Iran's oil and gas sector imposed over its controversial nuclear programme.

"This gas pipeline is a sign of show of resistance against domination," Ahmadinejad said.

"There are some nations who are against the progress of people, and so they are using the nuclear issue as a pretext to hinder the progress of the nations," he said.

"This pipeline has nothing to do with the nuclear issue, you can not build a nuclear bomb with natural gas," he said, speaking alongside Zardari in comments broadcast live on state television.

"This pipeline is peacemaker, so if those countries are not cooperating, then they should not get in the way."

Although the pipeline on the Iranian side has almost been completed, Pakistan has run into repeated difficulties, both in financing the project and over the threat of US sanctions.

Like the European Union, Washington has slapped crippling unilateral sanctions on Iran over and above UN sanctions imposed over its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

Iran eventually agreed to finance a third of the costs of the Pakistani part of the pipeline, with the work to be carried out by an Iranian company.

Pakistan says it plans to generate 20 percent of its electricity using Iranian gas from the pipeline.

The visit was Zardari's second to Iran in a fortnight and came after officials said a consortium would start work on the pipeline on Pakistani territory despite the US sanctions threat.

Analysts said Zardari's Pakistan People's Party was likely to seek to exploit its defiance of Washington over the pipeline to boost its popularity ahead of a general election in May.

"They will say that we signed the deal with Iran despite US pressure and try to convince voters that we can stand against the US," political analyst Hasan Askari said.

Anti-US sentiment runs high in Pakistan and five years of PPP government have done little to address the country's crippling energy crisis, with severe shortages of electricity in the summer and gas in the winter.

Iran has promised \$500 million to help Pakistan with the cost of building its side of the pipeline, but it is unclear where Islamabad -- grappling with a weak economy -- will find the remaining \$1 billion it needs to complete the work.

Iran has the second largest gas reserves in the world, but has been strangled by a Western oil embargo that has seen its crude exports halved in the past year.

It currently produces around 600 million cubic metres of gas per day, almost all of which is consumed domestically due to lack of exports. Its only foreign client is Turkey, which buys about 30 million cubic metres of gas per day.